

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Santa Ana Region

June 24, 2005

STAFF REPORT

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: Appeal for an Exemption from the 30 Percent Maximum Slope Requirement for the Use of a Subsurface Disposal System – Lois and Dave Butterfield, State Highway 243, Idyllwild Area, Riverside County, APN 556-310-005

DISCUSSION:

On May 26, 2005, Lawrence Strahm of Inland Foundation Engineering, Inc., on behalf of Lois and Dave Butterfield, submitted a request to construct a home on a 156.52-acre parcel utilizing on-site septic tank-subsurface disposal system in the Idyllwild area of Riverside County. The owner proposes to construct a house on the property. There is no sewer available that could service the lot.

Idyllwild is a mountainous area of the region. The lot has relatively steep slopes and the slope in the disposal area is approximately 35 percent. This slope meets Riverside County Department of Environmental Health guidelines; however, it does not comply with the Board's guidelines.

In 1979, the Regional Board adopted "*Guidelines for Sewage Disposal from Land Developments.*" These guidelines established minimum criteria for the use of individual disposal systems to prevent pollution or nuisance from discharges to leaching or percolation systems. These guidelines stipulate, in part, "*Natural or finished ground slope in the disposal area shall not be greater than 30 percent.*" When slopes in the disposal area are greater than 30 percent, the probability of sanitary wastes surfacing is much greater, thereby creating a threat of nuisance, pollution, and public health hazard.

At the time they were adopted, the Board's "*Guidelines*" were consistent with those implemented by Riverside and San Bernardino County Health Department. However, both Counties have since updated their requirements in several areas. Both health departments now allow the installation of septic systems in areas of up to 45 percent slope, provided certain conditions are met (e.g., the greater the slope, the deeper the leach lines must be installed).

Mr. & Mrs. Butterfield are unable to find a suitable location on the property for the disposal system with less than 35 percent slope. Therefore, they are appealing to the Board for an exemption to place the proposed system in an area that exceeds the Board's 30 percent criterion, but satisfies Riverside County's 45 percent criterion (35 percent slope).

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Mr. & Mrs. Butterfield's request for an exemption for this project for the use of an individual sewage disposal system, provided that the property owners obtain approval for the subsurface disposal system from Riverside County Department of Environmental Health.

Comments were solicited from the following agencies

State Water Resources Control Board, Office of Chief Counsel – Jorge Leon
Riverside County Department of Environmental Health – Sam Martinez
Riverside County Department of Building and Safety – Steve Dondalski
Inland Foundation Engineering, Inc. – Lawrence E. Strahm
Southland Engineering – Christy Callens



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Santa Ana Region



Jun C. Lloyd, Ph.D.
Agency Secretary

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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

June 9, 2005

Lois and Dave Butterfield
9785 Towne Center Drive
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APPEAL TO THE REGIONAL BOARD FOR AN EXEMPTION FROM THE 30 PERCENT SLOPE REQUIREMENT FOR THE USE OF ONSITE SUBSURFACE DISPOSAL SYSTEM AT STATE HIGHWAY 243, IDYLLWILD AREA, RIVERSIDE COUNTY, APN 556-310-005

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Butterfield:

This is in response to your request to appeal Regional Board staff's denial of an exemption from the 30 percent slope requirement for the use of on-site subsurface disposal system at the above-referenced site. Your appeal has been scheduled for consideration at the Board's June 24, 2005 meeting at the City Council Chambers of Loma Linda, 25541 Barton Road, Loma Linda. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. A copy of the staff report that will be presented to the Board regarding this matter and the agenda announcement for the meeting are enclosed.

During the meeting, you will have an opportunity to present your case to the Board. If you have any questions about the proceedings, please contact Jun Martirez at (951) 782-3258 or Susan Beeson at (951) 782-4902.

Sincerely,

for Joanne E. Schneider
Environmental Program Manager

Enclosures: Staff Report and Agenda Announcement

cc w/enc: State Water Resources Control Board, Office of Chief Counsel – Jorge Leon
Riverside County Environmental Health – Sam Martinez
Riverside County Building and Safety – Steve Dondalski
Inland Foundation Engineering, Inc. – Lawrence E. Strahm
Southland Engineering – Christy Callens

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California Environmental Protection Agency



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